

## ***Solution Forum Summary Report***

**Name of Event:** Wisconsin Association of Aging Unit Directors Independent Aging Event

**Date of Event:** April 29, 2005

**Location of Event:** Country Springs Hotel and Conference Center - Stevens Point, Wisconsin

**Number of Persons Attending:** 28

**Sponsoring Organization:** Wisconsin Association of Aging Unit Directors

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### **Priority Issue #1: Our Community – Caregiver Support**

#### **Barriers:**

- Employment policies do not adequately support caregivers
- Respite services not affordable or unavailable
- Requirements of National Family Caregiver Support Program too prescriptive for allocated resources
- Employers, doctors, family members lack awareness of magnitude of caregiving issues
- Long term care workforce inadequate in numbers and in training
- Taxes and liability issues for private pay workers
- Waiver policies regarding payment to family members

#### **Solutions:**

1. Create/enhance federal policies that support caregivers:
  - Provide tax breaks and/or incentives for family caregivers
  - Expand the definitions of family in the Family and Medical Leave Act to include in-laws and other appropriate kin serving as the caregiver
  - Create and expand incentives that reward employers for implementing family friendly policies and procedures.
2. Expand and provide more flexibility in federal funding:
  - Allow for flexibility in NFCSP to more adequately address individual caregiver needs
  - Expand Medicare benefits to include payment for respite, other long term care needs, geriatric case management (holistic, comprehensive)
  - Expand Medicare Hospice Benefits to include family caregiver
  - Expand benefits provided by Long Term Care Insurance to include supportive non-medical personal care
  - Increase Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement for geriatric assessments

3. Implement a “Federal Recognition” Awareness Campaign regarding Caregiving Issues
  - Develop a national awareness, education and outreach campaign, utilizing a national spokesman regarding the value of the contributions made by caregivers
  - Increase Medicare reimbursement for geriatric assessments

## **Priority Issue # 2: Health & Long Term Living**

### **Barriers:**

- Not enough geriatric specialists
- Poor reimbursement for Medicare and Medicaid services
- No or limited funding for prevention programs targeting older adults such as dietitian services, hearing, vision, dentistry services, memory assessments, adaptive aids, mental health services
- Public Health Departments focus on programs primarily for youth and families with no support/incentive to look at older adults, as funding looks at “number of years of life saved”

### **Solutions:**

1. Provide federal education grants and loans specifically for people specializing in geriatric services, such as forgiving a percentage of loans after years of service
2. Expand federal public health program that provides incentives for serving under-served populations (not just geographic areas)
3. Support incentives at the federal level for public health to increase services to the elderly population
4. Create federal commitment to fund prevention programs for older adults in proportion to funds spent on other targeted populations based on demographics